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To realize fully the significance of the inau in the eyes of the Ainu, one must see what importance is attached to them in moments of grave danger. Many a time have I sailed with the Ainu in their frail canoes on the stormy Okhotsk Sea, and more than once have the raging billows threatened to engulf us; but never, even in the most critical moments, did our companions lose their self-possession. Realizing the danger we were in, the Ainu helmsman would take out a small stick prepared beforehand, and would begin to cut it quickly into shavings. When the figure was ready, he would cast it into the waves with the instruction, "Go to the 'master' of the sea and tell him to take a good look. Will it be well if we and this Russian gentleman perish, and the kamui does not look on?"

It remains to clear up the rôle played by the *shavings* in the inau. Precisely why does the "being cut into shavings" appear as their indispensable attribute? The answer, I surmise, is, that the value of the shavings is associated with the ideas that are in the mind of the Ainu during the process of "shaving." Very frequently he has to shave pieces of wood, several times a day even, — whenever he has to make a fire in the open air, often in the midst of rain and wind, which are so common in his rough and inclement country. Believing as he does that the tree is animated, even manlike, — the sap of which he considers blood; the branches, arms; the rustle of its leaves, speech, — he cannot help being struck with the mysterious expressiveness of those long, fantastically winding, pointed tree-*tongues*, which fly so swiftly from under his curved knife, only to turn again with equal rapidity, as if alive, into grotesque curls.

And the Ainu, as we have seen, looks upon the matter just this way, calling his inau *"ikoytaku ainu"* ("orator-man"). Thus the Gilyak, too, calls it, *khlay-nivukh* (synonyme of the Ainu term, literally, "interpreting man"). The shavings on the inau are precisely the orator's tongues, and in these latter lies the whole sense of the inau. This is not merely hypothetical. It is confirmed by the formation of the word *inau* itself. It is composed of the common pleonastic particle *i*, which is very often omitted, — for instance, in the word *inomi* = *nomi*

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778 196 174 [193] ("sacrifice"),—and the word *nau*, consisting of *ni* ("tree") and *ay* ("tongue"). Thus *inau* signifies literally "a tree's tongue."

778 191 Again, this peculiar idea of *tongues* of a tree-orator presents nothing exceptional in comparative ethnography. Ideas almost identical are to be found in most diverse parts of the earth and among most diverse peoples of those parts, on the subject, for example, of *fire* in connection with the noisy *many-tonguedness* of its flame.

778 To sum up, inau are "shaved" trees and pieces of wood, commonly in the shape of human figures, which act as men's intercessors before deities. Their power lies in their numerous *tongues* (shavings), which increase the suasive power of their eloquence to an extraordinary degree. Their present-day variety of form and destination is the result of a long evolution. In the beginning, a bunch of shavings issuing from a single short stem, after the manner of a stick shaved for kindling a fire, was probably all-sufficient.

[532] In the course of time the Ainu began to pay more attention to the stem proper (body of the mediator), began to endow it with notches, a little head-piece, hands, arms, and to arrange the shavings (as a sort of supplement to the figures) in the form of hair, braids, vegetation on the body, and so forth. On the other hand, the shavings in themselves, apart from the stem, attained an independent development and most varied application.

At first mere "tongues" before the gods, the inau, owing to the importance of their rôle, the habit of looking upon them as a cult-object indispensable in all cases, have acquired to some degree an *independent* importance of sacredness and divinity. To them independent wonder-working power began to be attributed. Hence inau began to be looked upon, not only as intercessors before gods, but even as objects agreeable and useful to the gods themselves. Thus the "shaved" trees in front [782] of the arena at the bear festival are destined partly to the Bear himself and partly to his mother, evidently as simple amulets for these divine beings. Gods, just as much as men, are in [191] need of them. Thus the Orok, for example, the neighbors of